



**Luke A. Bronin**  
**Mayor**

**Energy & Technology Committee**

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Testimony

Senator Needleman, Representative Arconti, Senator Formica, Representative Ferraro and honorable members of the Energy & Technology Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on:

**SB 176 - An Act Concerning Shared Clean Energy Facilities**

I fully support the three main provisions of this legislation and the goal of expanding access to and opportunities for development of renewable energy.

The state's existing shared clean energy program allows individuals who rent their property, rather than own, to participate in the green energy revolution by securing some part of a shared solar field or other source of renewable energy generation. In a city like Hartford, where the majority of residents rent their home or apartment, shared clean energy allows much broader participation in renewables than would otherwise be possible.

This bill raises the total megawatt cap on the shared clean energy program, and also expands the portion of the program set aside for low-income customers and low-income service organizations. Additionally, the bill requires that forty percent of the shared clean energy facilities be located within environmental justice communities, such as distressed municipalities. Both of these measures will meaningfully expand access and equity in the renewable energy market.

I would respectfully suggest to the committee that this bill's aims and its benefits could be magnified by a similar expansion of the state's virtual net metering (VNM) program. Lifting of the VNM program cap would extend to entire communities the benefits that shared clean energy provides to individuals. Installing solar panels, for instance, is not always practical at every given municipal facility. Virtual net metering allows renewable generation installed at another location to be credited against the metered electric consumption at any municipal facility.

Connecticut's virtual net metering program has been capped and fully subscribed for many years. The waiting list for this popular program has grown so long that in the Eversource service territory alone, there are now over 85 MW of projects on the program's waiting list, compared to 75 MW of projects currently accepted into the program.

I urge the committee to consider removing or significantly raising the cap on municipal participation in the virtual net metering program. Doing so would further the state's long-term renewable energy goals by facilitating the installation of new renewable generation capacity, while also benefitting property taxpayers by lowering municipal energy bills.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your attention to these important matters. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.